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to cook, and await the beginning of the ritual. Nearly all the people arrive by noon, although there are some stragglers. The assemblage on the first day of the ceremony is generally much smaller than that on the second day. The first day is considered supremely sacred, and much time is given to the propitiation of ancestors of the host group and, in turn, those of the participating reservations which traditionally comprise the ritual congregation. Things change somewhat on the second (or third) day of the ceremony, and many profane activities are introduced. People tend to mix more freely on the second day, and there is usually a good deal of wine-drinking (although this is proscribed in certain parts of Mapucheland). On the second day, the spectators may outnumber the participants, and the total assemblage might easily reach several thousand people. This vulgarization of the ceremony is deeply regretted by the elders.

As the various family groups of participants arrive, they take up positions sufficiently distant from the center of the field of ceremonial activity. If *ramadas* have been set up to receive everyone, their positions are predetermined. The officials (*kamañ*: guardians of one sort or another) of the ceremony are responsible for the ordering of the crowd and do not hesitate to ask family groups to move to more suitable places rimming the ceremonial field. There is a good deal of milling about among the assemblage before the ceremony starts, as people compete to obtain positions of vantage from which to view the activities. At the first sign of ritual activity, however, the entire audience fixes its attention on the *rewe* and settles down to watch the proceedings.

Ideally, the ritual is divided into four parts, each largely a repetition of the other. If there is a full performance, the ritual falls into four sections: early morning, mid-morning, early afternoon, late afternoon. There are no nocturnal rites, although there is a good deal of visiting among the participants and guests, should they remain the night on the ceremonial field.

Whether there are four, three, or only two ritual periods, each closely duplicates the main features of the others. There is always this repetition, even though there should be only a morning and an afternoon session. The ritual of the second

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session follows the pattern set during the first. However, on the second day, the regimen of the first day might be threatened by drunkenness if the officials have not maintained proper supervision. The job of the officials, especially the sergeants, is to preserve order, and they may strike at people with their long poles of office if anyone violates their orders. To a great extent, it is felt that the smoothness with which the ceremony is conducted determines its success or failure, and the sergeants and captains may evict people with impunity in order to maintain the proper atmosphere for the traditional conduct of the affair.

After the initial prayer is offered in the special language (archaic) to *ñenechen* and the ancestors, the *ñillatufe* signals for the performance of *awün*, which clears the ceremonial field of any lurking forces of evil. This act is so important to the successful conclusion of *ñillatun* that, even where there are few horses available, I have seen it performed by men riding stick horses. The altar is circled several times, ideally four times or a multiple of four. The more horsemen available, the more effective the maneuver. In addition to galloping around the sacred field, some of the riders may wear sheepskin masks or have their faces painted in order to frighten away the ghosts, meanwhile hiding their own identity from them.

The front of the main altar, before which the head priest stands, faces east, a ritually propitious direction. It is around this altar and the secondary one (*llañi*), which is set up a hundred yards or so east of it, that the riders gallop. Starting from the right of the main altar, the horsemen ride counterclockwise in a number of complete circuits. Two of the riders carry standards, and the rest follow them in a column of twos, the rear being taken up by one of the sergeants who carries a long staff of office. The sergeant, who takes his cues from the captain or the priest, shouts commands to the riders. At regular intervals they raise a cry to chase away the evil spirits. All of this is a duplication of the *amulpellun* ceremony which takes place during funerals and is conducted for the same purpose. The riders are the center of attraction, as they race around the ceremonial field. They finally dismount near the *llañi*, where they tether their horses, to begin